

**TOWN OF NORTHFIELD, VERMONT
SELECT BOARD REGULAR MEETING
Minutes of February 22, 2022**

- I. ROLL CALL.** Select Board Chair K. David Maxwell, Board members Julie H. Goodrich, Nathaniel Miller, Charles Morse, and John Stevens. Also present were Acting Clerk Kenneth McCann, Laurie Baroffio (Finance Director), Lawton Rutter (Ambulance Chief), Yvonne Lory (Capstone Community Action), Tanya Crawford-Stempel (Good Samaritan Haven), John Caceres (Washington County Mental Health Services), Tiffany (Mosaic Vermont), Caitlin Roseen (Community Harvest of Central Vermont), Bryce Hawes, Gerard LaVarnway, Cassie Morse, Carolyn Stevens, and Elroy Hill.

Chair Maxwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Participants had the option of attending the meeting either in person or remotely through Go-to-Meeting.

- II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIENCE.** Those persons present were asked to rise and recite the Pledge of Allegiance. The remote contingent also participated as much as possible.

III. PUBLIC HEARING

- a. Northfield Town Meeting Warned Articles.** State law requires the Select Board to hold a public hearing prior to Town Meeting so members of the public can discuss or ask questions regarding the articles to be voted upon by Australian Ballot. Most involve funding requests from regional non-profit organizations and all were invited by mail to attend this public hearing. Chair Maxwell then went through the list of Australian Ballot articles for any comments or questions.

Article 2. Shall the voters authorize total fund expenditures of \$5,782,940 of which \$3,409,240 shall be raised by property taxes and \$2,373,700 by non-tax revenues? There was no discussion.

Article 3. Shall the voters authorize the Select Board to borrow an amount not to exceed one hundred and twenty-eight thousand dollars (\$128,000) for a period not to exceed ten (10) years for the purchase of a Highway Loader? There was no discussion.

Article 4. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of an amount not to exceed twenty-one thousand dollars (\$21,000) for FY23 towards the Northfield Commuter year-round commuter with service between Northfield and Montpelier? There was no discussion.

Article 5. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$13,600 for the Central Vermont Home Health and Hospice? There was no discussion.

Article 6. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$3,000 for the Central Vermont Council on Aging? There was no discussion.

Article 7. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,800 for the Good Samaritan Haven? Tanya Crawford-Stempel is a Northfield resident who serves on the Good Samaritan Haven's Board of Directors. She noted the Good Samaritan Haven provides the only homeless shelter service in Washington County. During the pandemic, the number of persons assisted on a regular basis increased from thirty-two (32) to over three hundred (300). In order to help meet this demand, in August 2021 the Good Samaritan Haven purchased the Twin City Motel located in Berlin on the Barre-Montpelier Road. Ms. Crawford-Stempel said the Good Samaritan Haven does take advantage of available state and federal funding for these programs but said every dollar received from local communities helps out as well and they would be grateful for continued support from Northfield voters. The Select Board members had no questions but were grateful for valuable service Good Samaritan Haven provides and for Ms. Crawford-Stempel's presentation tonight.

Article 8. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,500 for the Washington County Diversion Program? There was no discussion.

Article 9. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$2,500 for Washington County Mental Health Services, Inc.? John Caceres is the Communications and Development Director for Washington County Mental Health Services (WCMHS). He said WCMHS provides its services on a 24/7 basis even though the pandemic resulted in some of their in-person services going remote at times. Mr. Caceres said WCMHS did much to assist local children and adults deal with the ramifications of the pandemic as well as providing whatever was needed for daily living. Among those assisted in the last year were 195 Northfield residents. Mr. Caceres noted WCMHS was designated a Center of Excellence in March 2018 for providing easy access to services, exceptional customer care, comprehensive care, etc. Board member Morse noted WCMHS truly is valuable community resource and thanked Mr. Caceres for tonight's report.

Article 10. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,250 for the People's Health and Wellness Clinic? There was no discussion.

Article 11. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for Central Vermont Adult Basic Education? There was no discussion.

Article 12. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for Mosaic Vermont (formerly the Sexual Assault Crisis Team of Washington County)? Tiffany is an advocate for Mosaic Vermont, which provides its services to sexual assault survivors of all ages. She thanked Northfield voters for their past support and added that Mosaic Vermont also is pro-active with violence prevention programs. This includes outreach to local schools as well as an informative guide created by local youth and directed to local youth. Tiffany recommends those seeking to participate in their programs and those willing to provide volunteer assistance should go to their website (<https://mosaic-vt.org>) for additional information. Board member Morse said this was an excellent organization and some of their staff members have come to the Northfield Farmers Market on occasion to provide vendors and customers with information about all their services.

Article 13. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,200 for the Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired? There was no discussion.

Article 14. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the Arts Bus? There was no discussion.

Article 15. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Capstone Community Action, Inc.? Yvonne Lory said Capstone was founded in 1965 under a different name (Central Vermont Community Action Council) and serves residents of Washington, Orange, and Lamoille counties along with some neighboring communities. In the last year, Capstone assisted 166 Northfield households representing 238 individuals with various programs and services including food assistance, home heating concerns, housing problems, acquisition of work skills, transportation issues, etc. Ms. Lory said Capstone is very grateful for the support Northfield voters have shown in the past and hopes that will continue. She noted Capstone did have to close its main office for a while during the pandemic but at that time did expand its social media resources. Anyone seeking additional information should check out their website (<https://capstonevt.org/>). Board member Morse was grateful Ms. Lory was present tonight to explain the many services Capstone provides to Central Vermont residents.

Article 16. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Circle? There was no discussion.

Article 17. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for Good Beginnings of Central Vermont? There was no discussion.

Article 18. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$1,000 for the Vermont Center for Independent Living? There was no discussion.

Article 19. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$800 for the Family Center of Washington County? There was no discussion.

Article 20. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$600 for the Washington County Youth Service Bureau/Boys & Girls Club? There was no discussion.

Article 21. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$500 for the Everybody Wins! Vermont? Chair Maxwell said this organization provides in-person mentoring in our public schools. He has volunteered his own time to this in the past and found it to be a very rewarding experience for all involved.

Article 22. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$400 for Community Harvest of Central Vermont? Caitlin Roseen is the Gleaning Program & Community Outreach Manager for Community Harvest of Central Vermont (CHCV). She first thanked the Select Board members for inviting her to speak tonight on behalf of her organization. She said the mission of CHCV is to bring communities together by gleaning at local farms and collecting edible foodstuffs that otherwise would have gone to waste. CHCV works with hundreds of volunteers each year to assist Central Vermont residents who face food insecurity. Since its founding in 2018, CHCV has provided 1,600,000 food servings to local food banks, public schools, etc. In the last year, 16,000 individuals were assisted with 138,000 pounds of foodstuffs. Of their volunteers, at least thirty (30) are from Northfield and CHCV has partnered with three (3) local farms. Foodstuffs distributed locally have gone to the Northfield Senior Center, the CERV Food Shelf, Northfield schools, etc. 10,000 pounds of gleaned food was provided to Northfield residents in the past year. Board member Goodrich felt this is a wonderful program that definitely benefits the Northfield community. Chair Maxwell is always amazed by the amount of gleaned food provided to Northfield and other towns. Cassie Morse organizes the Northfield Farmers Market and she really enjoyed Ms. Roseen's presentation. She asked if there would be any interest in CHCV partnering with the Northfield Farmers Market. Ms. Roseen said the only farmers market now partnered with CHCV is Montpelier's but they are always willing to expand and partner with others. Ms. Morse will contact CHCV in order to discuss this possibility.

Article 23. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$400 for the Friends of the Winooski River? There was no discussion.

Article 24. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$300 for Green Up Vermont? There was no discussion.

Article 25. Shall the voters authorize the expenditure of \$250 for OUR House of Central Vermont? There was no discussion.

Article 26. Shall the Town of Northfield collect property taxes in four (4) installments which shall be due on August 19, 2022 and November 18, 2022 and February 10, 2023 and May 12, 2023? There was no discussion.

The public hearing closed at 7:30 p.m.

IV. SET/ADJUST AGENDA. There were no changes to the posted agenda.

V. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (SCHEDULED): None.

VI. DEPARTMENT HEAD REPORT

- a. **Lawton Rutter, Ambulance Chief.** Chief Rutter wanted to provide a quick overview of Northfield Ambulance Service (NAS) activities in the current fiscal year. He said compared with the same timepoint in the previous fiscal year, NAS has been quite a bit busier with callouts, standby details, COVID-19 testing, etc. Regarding the latter, due to decreased demand, NAS no longer does daily testing but rather is down to four (4) days per week (Mondays in Northfield, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Wednesdays in Williamstown, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.; Thursdays in Montpelier, 3:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.; and Fridays in Northfield, 4:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.). This is in addition to hosting periodic vaccination clinics in the community.

As for his collected data, Chief Rutter said from the start of the current fiscal year (07/01/21) through the end of January 2022, NAS responded to 541 calls for service, which resulted in 569 total run sheets. This includes 351 emergency transports, 36 non-emergency transports, and 17 standby details. There also were 134 no-transport callouts, 7 paramedic intercepts from outside agencies, and 65 NAS paramedic calls. Prior to NAS achieving paramedic certification in April 2021, every callout requiring the services of a trained paramedic was handled by an outside agency, which was a great expense. There have been significant savings since NAS personnel have been able to provide paramedic services. Chief Rutter noted NAS activity is up twenty-five percent (25%) in the first seven (7) months of the current fiscal year compared to the same period in the previous one. There had been a seventeen percent (17%) decrease in NAS activity in the previous fiscal year due to the pandemic lessening the number of non-emergency transports, etc.

Chief Rutter also serves as Northfield's E-911 Coordinator. He expects to be busier in this capacity in coming months as more building permits are filed in the spring and summer months. He also encourages all Northfield residents to have a highly visible E-911 address posted in front of their homes in case of emergencies.

Chief Rutter also serves as the Town Health Officer and with his deputy Chris Golder provides a myriad of services. This includes house inspections, looking into trash problem complaints, investigating dog bites, mediating landlord/tenant disputes, etc. There were forty (40) calls for service in 2021 and there in a full breakdown in the Town Health Officer submission in the Town Report. Chief Rutter said calls for service have been fairly steady throughout the pandemic. Board member Goodrich asked how many active cases there were at this time. Chief Rutter said he had three (3) and Deputy Health Officer Golder had the same number. He added some cases can be resolved relatively quickly but others take some time. Board member Morse said the Town Report submission indicated twelve (12) animal bites in 2021. He asked if these were all domestic animals. Chief Rutter confirmed they were and noted each animal bite needs to be fully investigated and documented.

Returning to his role as NAS Chief, Chief Rutter said if the proposed FY 2022/2023 budget is approved by Northfield voters, he will be able to purchase two (2) PowerLoad systems in the next fiscal year. One will be part of an ambulance unit remount and the other installed on another unit. Chief Rutter will be researching possible grant opportunities in order to offset part of this expense. He also will be seeking outside funds to cover some of the costs of paramedic training, emergency response equipment, etc. As for his equipment, Chief Rutter expects two (2) radio replacements in the near future. These will be scheduled replacements as these radios have heavy usage and eventually have issues. The new radios also will have communications upgrades so NAS can interact better with other regional first responders. There were no other questions and there was a general consensus that Chief Rutter is doing an excellent job in carrying out his many and diverse duties.

VII. LIQUOR CONTROL COMMISSION

a. Liquor License Renewals

- 1. Champlain Farms.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- 2. O'Maddi's Deli & Café.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the liquor license renewal. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

b. Outside Consumption Permit

- 1. O'Maddi's Deli & Café.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the outside consumption permit. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

VIII. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- a. **February 8, 2022 (Regular Meeting).** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the minutes. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

IX. APPROVAL OF BILLS

- a. **Approval of Warrant #16-22.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve Warrant #16-22 in the amount of \$102,216.52. Board member Goodrich asked about a \$3,000 payment to the Northfield Community Development Network (NCDN) regarding the proposed business handbook. Chair Maxwell said the Select Board did authorize spending up to \$10,000 for the creation of a local business handbook but didn't know the status of this project. Finance Director Laurie Baroffio believes this is the first payment. Chair Maxwell reviewed the submitted invoice and confirmed it covered the first thirty (30) hours of work done on this project. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**
- b. **Approval of Biweekly Payroll through February 6, 2022.** Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to approve the biweekly payroll in the amount of \$106,174.58. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

X. SELECT BOARD

- a. **Engineering Services Agreement – Vermont Route 12 Water Main and Replacement Water Storage Tank Project.** Chair Maxwell said Manager Schulz is seeking Select Board authorization for him to sign this agreement on behalf of the Town of Northfield. Manager Schulz had emailed the Select Board members a full description of the proposed project and noted that the total cost of the engineering services will be \$15,000. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to authorize Manager Schulz to sign this engineering services agreement with the Dufresne Group. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

XI. BOARD MEMBERS' COMMENTS, CONCERNS, QUESTIONS

- a. **DuBois & King Structural Analysis of the Northfield Municipal Building.** Board member Goodrich is concerned by some of the findings in this report and believes the needed repairs should be done as soon as possible. It was noted there is about \$80,000 in the building's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) budget.
- b. **Select Board Member Nathaniel Miller.** Since he is not seeking reelection, this is Board member Miller's last regular meeting after six (6) years as a Select Board member. Board member Goodrich said his participation in these meetings will be certainly missed. Board member Morse is concerned that Board member Miller's mental health might suffer without the regular intellectual stimulation of these meetings, subcommittee meetings, budget meetings, etc. Board member Stevens also expressed his appreciation for Board member Miller's service. Chair Maxwell concurred and said it always was a pleasure to work with Board member Miller. He was especially grateful for Board member Miller's service on the Highway Planning & Project Oversight Subcommittee, which led to the development of a program of regular and scheduled gravel resurfacing of Northfield's backroads. Board member Miller said it was a privilege to serve with his fellow Select Board members and he truly believes much had been accomplished for the community during his tenure.

XII. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION (UNSCHEDULED). There was none.

XIII. ADJOURNMENT. Motion by Board member Morse, seconded by Board member Stevens, to adjourn. **Motion passed 5-0-0.**

The Board adjourned at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth L. McCann

Kenneth L. McCann, Acting Clerk

An audio recording of this meeting is available in the Town Manager's Office.

These minutes were approved at the Select Board regular meeting of March 8, 2022.